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7 March 2011

Testimony in favor of HB-5387: ~~AN ACT ESTABLISHING A FINE FOR THE SUBSEQUENT ILLEGAL DUMPING OF LITTER~~

HB 5387 co-sponsors:

Rep. Matthew Ritter, 1st Dist.

Rep. Linda Schofield, 16th Dist.

Introduced by: Environment Committee

To Whom it May Concern,

I recommend HB-5387: *An Act Establishing A Fine For The Subsequent Illegal Dumping Of Litter*, be passed by the Environment Committee.

Many of us understand that dumping is illegal. Public awareness campaigns encouraging people not to be "litter bugs" often seem like civic lessons learned long ago. However, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission routinely hears of illegal dumping and litter problems in parks. In addition, illegal dumping and littering is a problem throughout the Park River Watershed – which extends from the Connecticut River east to the Metacomet Ridge, North into Bloomfield and South into Newington and New Britain. Annual river clean-ups held throughout Connecticut and New England are needed to pick up after illegal dumping.

As landfills throughout the state close, illegal dumping has increased. State Statutes #22A-250 and 22A-250b allow for the confiscation of the vehicle owned by perpetrators of illegal dumping. This punishment is very appropriate for repeat offenders, such as commercial contractors who knowingly and routinely dump. However, some law enforcement officers are reluctant to confiscate vehicles because vehicle loss has severe repercussions on individuals and small businesses. For this reason there needs to be flexibility in the sequence of punishments for dumping violations. HB 5387 will increase flexibility so that enforcement of illegal dumping can progress, rather than be neglected by law enforcement officers. A reasonable sequence of fines can establish a record of violations, which if necessary, will justify the confiscation of vehicles.

This bill will also allow municipalities to increase fines (which cannot exceed the state fine) – and if local enforcement officers make the arrest, municipalities will receive half of the fines collected for enforcement of dumping laws on state property.

Illegal dumping is a problem that must be addressed by adequate enforcement as well as public awareness. HB-5387 can help to ensure that enforcement officers help Connecticut keep the nature of our state and municipal parks beautiful. Thank you for listening.

Testimony submitted by:

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*Acting Chair, City of Hartford Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission
Director, Park River Watershed Revitalization Initiative*